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Report of the Executive Director*

Summary

The present document provides a mid-term review of the implementation of the UNIFEM Strategy and Business Plan 2000-2003, focusing on trends and challenges and major results achieved during the biennium 2000-2002.

The opportunities and challenges of today's world highlight the need for transformational leadership, economic justice, and a commitment to sustained peace. Women are critical to all efforts to create a world free from poverty, violence and inequality. UNIFEM programming, focused on women's economic security, governance and peace-building, and women's human rights contributes significantly to the response of the United Nations system to these challenges. Implementation of each of these objectives is measured and driven by a results-based framework, designed to create a learning and knowledge based institution. The present report presents major results achieved in each of the UNIFEM programme areas and looks at challenges and opportunities for the second biennium of its Strategy and Business Plan.

In taking note of the present report, the Executive Board may wish to endorse the results achieved by UNIFEM in implementing its Strategy and Business Plan 2002-2003, recognize its continuing progress in becoming the centre of excellence within the United Nations development system for promoting women's empowerment and gender equality, in line with its mandate as contained in General Assembly resolution 39/125 and reaffirm the role of UNIFEM in promoting gender-mainstreaming throughout the operational activities of the United Nations system.

* The collection and synthesis of results from all regions needed to present the Executive Board with the most up-to-date information has delayed submission of the present document.

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Introduction

1. At its second regular session in April 2000, the Executive Board of UNDP and UNFPA endorsed the Strategy and Business Plan 2000-2003 of the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM). Taking into account the results achieved, lessons learned and gaps remaining from the previous Plan, the Strategy and Business Plan 2000-2003 outlined five strategic objectives to guide the work of the organization for the next four-year period. The present document provides a mid-term review of the implementation of the Strategy and Business Plan 2000-2003, focusing on trends, challenges and major results achieved during 2000-2002.

2. Two globally agreed documents are central guides for UNIFEM efforts: the Beijing Platform for Action, adopted at the 1995 Fourth World Conference on Women, and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW). UNIFEM is dedicated to building strong women's organizations to enable them to negotiate new and better policies with their Governments and international organizations, and to assisting Governments in implement their commitments to women's empowerment and gender equality. In the context of the Secretary-General's reform agenda, UNIFEM supports the United Nations system by ensuring that gender concerns are incorporated into the policies and activities of United Nations organizations, governments, and civil society partners.

Trends: challenges and opportunities

3. Several global trends affected UNIFEM work during the reporting period, creating both challenges and opportunities. First, as globalization increasingly influences economic opportunities worldwide, its effects remain uneven, creating both risks and opportunities. While globalization has generated opportunities for local producers and entrepreneurs to reach international markets, for many poor women, it has intensified existing inequalities, often translating into the loss of livelihoods, labour rights and social benefits. Second, the growing number of national and regional conflicts, notably in Afghanistan, South Asia, the Middle East and Africa, underlines the disproportionate number of women among displaced and refugee communities and the widespread use of sexual violence as a weapon of war, highlighting the need to draw on women's leadership in conflict resolution and peace-building. Finally, the rising rate of HIV/AIDS infection among women underlines the fact that in non-conflict situations, as well, women's human rights are still denied, violated or ignored in many countries and contexts. Violence against women continues in all its many forms--and while recognition of the gender and human rights dimensions of HIV/AIDS has increased, the growing toll of the pandemic on women is urgently in need of greater visibility and action.

4. At the same time, several recent developments within the United Nations system have significantly expanded the opportunities for UNIFEM to move forward on its mandate and implement its Strategy and Business Plan. In June 2000, at the United Nations General Assembly Special Session (UNGASS) Women 2000: Gender Equality, Development and Peace for the 21st Century (Beijing +5) Governments reaffirmed and strengthened the commitments that they made at the 1995 Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing. The Declaration of Commitment signed by all 189 Member States at the UNGASS on HIV/AIDS in June 1999 put gender equality and women's empowerment at the forefront of efforts to combat the epidemic worldwide. The Millennium development goals, adopted at the Millennium Summit in September 2000, include goal 3: advancing gender equality and women's empowerment, which endorses the mission and mandate of UNIFEM. Finally, the adoption of Security Council resolution 1325 on women, peace and security in October 2000 provides the opportunity to promote women's leadership in governance and peace-building in all regions.

5. Gender equality is also one of the 14 thematic sections of the triennial comprehensive policy review (E/1998/48). The TCPR 2002, which recognizes the importance of globalization, urges improved United Nations partnerships and capacity-building efforts to support national development priorities, specifically recommending efforts to ensure a reverse in the feminization of poverty and accelerated efforts in gender mainstreaming in the framework of all operational activities.

I. United Nations Development Fund for Women: mission and mandate

6. Within the United Nations system, UNIFEM works for women's empowerment and gender equality and links women's issues to national, regional and global agendas by fostering collaboration and providing financial and technical support to gender mainstreaming and women's empowerment strategies. Its mandate is to: (a) support innovative and experimental activities benefiting women in line with national and regional priorities; (b) serve as a catalyst, with the goal of ensuring the involvement of women in mainstream development activities, as often as possible at the pre-investment stage; and (c) play an innovative and catalytic role in relation to the United Nations system of development cooperation (General Assembly resolution 39/125). Subsequent General Assembly resolutions (54/136; 56/130) have endorsed and strengthened the work of UNIFEM in a number of strategic areas, including CEDAW implementation, peace and security and HIV/AIDS.

7. The opportunities and challenges of today's world make transformational leadership, economic justice, and a commitment to sustained global peace imperatives. Women are critical to all of these and therefore must be part of all national and international strategies to create a world free from poverty, violence and inequality. UNIFEM programming--focused on economic security, governance and peace building, and promoting women's human rights--is making a significant contribution to the coordinated response of the United Nations to the current challenges.

8. UNIFEM is responding to these opportunities and challenges by strengthening the strategic focus, synergy and inter-linkages among its programme efforts. Five core strategies guide UNIFEM work: (a) strengthening the capacity and leadership of women's organizations and networks; (b) leveraging political and financial support for women from a wide range of stakeholders; (c) forging new partnerships among women's organizations, Governments, the United Nations system and the private sector; (d) undertaking pilot projects to test innovative approaches to women's empowerment and gender mainstreaming; and (e) building a knowledge base on effective strategies for engendering mainstream development.

II. UNIFEM Strategy and Business Plan 2000-2003: a mid-term review

9. UNIFEM work is guided by its Strategy and Business Plan 2000-2003, which focuses on five key objectives:

(a) Increasing options and opportunities for women, especially poor women, through focused programming in three thematic areas;

(b) Strengthening United Nations system capacity to support women's empowerment and gender-mainstreaming;

(c) Strengthening effectiveness by incorporating the principles of a learning organization and building strategic partnerships;

(d) Ensuring that UNIFEM personnel, financial and programme management systems effectively and efficiently support the goals and programmes of the organization;

(e) Building a larger and more diversified resource base.

The remainder of the document outlines progress and results achieved under each of these objectives.

A. Programme activities

10. UNIFEM programme activities focused on measuring and achieving results under Objective 1: increasing options and opportunities for women, especially poor women, through focused programming in three thematic areas: (a) strengthening women's economic security and rights; (b) ensuring that women's leadership shapes governance and peace-building; and (c) promoting women's human rights and eliminating violence against women.

11. Implementation of each of these objectives is measured and driven by a results-based framework, which resulted from a consultative process and is designed to create a learning and knowledge-based institution. For each objective, a set of desired results were identified, together with a set of indicators of progress and a guide for measurement. Key results emerging from work in these three thematic areas have included: (a) women's economic security and rights; women's leadership in governance and peace-building; and (c) women's human rights and the elimination of violence against women.

Women's economic security and rights

12. UNIFEM work on strengthening women's economic security and rights responds to the opportunities and challenges presented by globalization. Four key results emerged from the organization's work in this area.

13. *New and strengthened institutions, laws and policies to facilitate women's equal ownership and access to economic resources and ensuring that women's work is recognized, valued and supported.* UNIFEM supports efforts to raise the awareness of policy-makers about the gender biases that limit women's economic opportunities, including tax systems, credit and investment policies that discriminate against women and the prevalence of a "male breadwinner" assumption that does not fully recognize women's work and worth. UNIFEM is collaborating with the International Labour Organization (ILO) to map the needs of home-based workers and advocate for greater social protection in the Asia and Pacific region. The Fund also supports studies and capacity-building strategies to identify the effects of national and international legislation and agreements on women's social and economic rights in Latin America. In Tajikistan, UNIFEM successfully advocated legislators to eliminate a disproportionate tax burden faced by women "suitcase traders". UNIFEM also supports the collection and use of sex-disaggregated data to inform economic policy-making, legislation and policies to strengthen women's economic security in the informal sector, and grassroots activities to link women's economic and social rights. It is working to achieve greater visibility for women's unpaid work in census exercises. Collaboration between UNIFEM and national statistical departments has contributed to the incorporation of gender in the data collection systems of India and Nepal, leading to greater acceptance by policy-makers of the need to measure women's work in national census exercises.

14. *Increased knowledge and understanding of how to manage globalization and economic transition from the perspective of poor women.* Analyzing the impact of trade policies on women's livelihoods and incorporating a gender perspective in macroeconomic policies are key elements of UNIFEM work in this area. In Africa and Latin America, UNIFEM is supporting the creation of regional networks to advocate for gender-responsive macroeconomic options, including a Network of African Women Economists and a network of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in Latin America and the Caribbean called Iniciativa Cartagena that advocates for gender perspectives in the outcomes of the International Conference on Financing for Development in Monterrey, Mexico, in March 2002, and its follow-up.

15. *Increased economic capacity for women entrepreneurs, producers and informal sector workers.* UNIFEM support is enabling women producers to strengthen market linkages, access information and communication technologies (ICTs) to facilitate business development, and analyze sub-sectors to identify promising economic opportunities. The Fund's assistance has been instrumental in launching the Technical Resources Network for Small and Micro-Enterprises in the Arab States, a forum for South Asian women entrepreneurs, a network of Peruvian and Ecuadorian artisan women, and networks of women entrepreneurs that are using ICTs to access new markets.

Supporting opportunities in information and communication technologies

In Jordan, an innovative partnership was launched between UNIFEM, Cisco Systems and the Government of Jordan to expand opportunities for women in the ICT sector. With support from the Cisco Foundation, UNIFEM commissioned a comprehensive assessment of gender issues and opportunities for women in the sector, the results of which were shared with the Government and academic institutions. The partnership is designing women-specific Cisco Networking Academy programmes and has developed a curriculum that takes young women's needs and interests into account. Results of this pilot will feed into replication projects in other countries in the region.

16. *New commitments to incorporate gender perspectives in government budget policies and allocations.* UNIFEM is providing direct support to gender responsive budget analysis in more than 20 programme countries. It collaborated with the Government of Belgium to organize a global meeting, " Strengthening Economic and Financial Governance Through Gender Responsive Budgeting," the goal of which was to mobilize political and financial support to strengthen the capacity of governments as well as civil society organizations to carry out these initiatives and to support the global vision of gender responsive budget initiatives in all countries by 2015. The conference resulted in the endorsement by 47 countries of a communiqué urging Governments and NGOs to encourage the incorporation of gender analysis in the preparation, implementation, audit and evaluation of government budgets at all levels. UNIFEM advocacy resulted in the incorporation of gender analysis in the design of the national health budget in Mexico and a chapter on gender inequalities as a regular feature of the annual economic survey published by the Government of India.

Women's leadership to shape governance processes and peace-building

17. UNIFEM programmes in governance and peace-building bring a gender perspective to constitutional, electoral, legislative, judicial and policy processes in order to strengthen the rule of law and ensure gender justice. Its work focuses on providing assistance to women in conflict situations; supporting their participation in peace processes; and strengthening the gender focus in electoral, constitutional, legislative and judicial processes.

Ensuring women's role in rebuilding Afghanistan

UNIFEM is supporting women's leadership in the peace-building and reconstruction process, enabling women to voice their needs and create a common vision for the future. A women's consultation in Brussels in December 2001, organized by UNIFEM in partnership with the Government of Belgium, brought together 40 Afghan women from both Afghanistan and the diaspora along with donors and United Nations organizations working in Afghanistan. The resulting Brussels Action Plan helped shape the United Nations Immediate and Transitional Assistance Programme (ITAP) for the Afghan People 2002 and the Preliminary Needs Assessment prepared under the auspices of UNDP, the World Bank and the Asian Development Bank. The Afghan Women's Consultation, held in Kabul in March 2002, brought together 60 women from different provinces and produced a national women's agenda calling for increased access to health care and education and greater participation in economic, political and social life.

UNIFEM strategy for Afghanistan focuses on the following areas: (a) *strengthening women's economic security, rights and opportunities to enjoy secure livelihoods* through skills training, employment and increased access to markets (with ILO and UNIDO); (b) *ensuring women's participation in national decision-making*, and supporting legal and constitutional reforms to comply with internationally adopted standards; (c) *supporting the Ministry of Women's Affairs (MOWA)* to develop a national strategy to support women's advancement and strengthen gender issues in national policy-making (with UNDP); (d) *supporting the establishment of regional Women's Centers*, in collaboration with MOWA, to train service providers and women's NGOs in a range of legal and social services; (e) *supporting Internally Displaced and refugee women* to reintegrate into their communities (with UNHCR); (f) *providing technical support to United Nations system wide efforts* to ensure women's participation in the United Nations system response; and (g) *support to NGOs, media and civil society* to raise awareness on women's situation and needs.

18. UNIFEM work in this area greatly expanded during the period under review, especially following the adoption of Security Council resolution 1325. In the preparations for the Security Council debate on women, peace and security, UNIFEM was asked by Namibia, during its presidency of the Security Council, to prepare background materials for the historic debate and to address the Council. UNIFEM worked with the NGO Working Group on Women and International Peace to arrange for women advocates knowledgeable about peace negotiations from Guatemala, Zambia, Somalia and Sierra Leone to present their personal perspectives to Security Council members. Their testimonies evoked a strong response from Council members. Over the reporting period, nearly $15 million has been contributed by bilateral donors and the United Nations Foundation for multi-year programmes to provide assistance to women in conflict, to build understanding of the impact of war and armed conflict on women, and to support women's roles in building peace. There are two critical results in this area.

19. *The creation of replicable models to increase women's leadership in peace-building and reconstruction.* In Africa, UNIFEM support to successful advocacy for gender perspectives in the Burundi peace process led to an invitation from the facilitator of the inter-Congolese dialogue to provide advice and subsequent support to women's groups to develop an agenda for influencing peace negotiations. In East Timor, UNIFEM collaboration with the Gender Adviser of the United Nations Transitional Administration in East Timor in supporting women's political participation resulted in 268 women candidates – 27 per cent of the total – and one woman being elected to the 88 member Constituent Assembly.

20. *New and strengthened partnerships with United Nations organizations to build women's leadership in peace-building and to engender protection and assistance efforts.* Collaborations have been launched with the Joint United Nations Programme of HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) and UNFPA to address gender and HIV/AIDS in the peacekeeping environment in Sierra Leone; with the United Nations Department of Political Affairs to support women's participation in peace processes in Burundi, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Sudan; with the United Nations Development Group and the country team in Islamabad to prepare the gender section of the ITAP for the Afghan People; and with the Office of the Special Advisor on Gender Issues and the Department of Peace Keeping Operations in the follow-up to Security Council resolution 1325. UNIFEM participation in the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) Consolidated Appeal for Afghanistan resulted in increased visibility of women and stimulated policy discussion within OCHA about ways to improve attention to gender issues within inter-agency processes. UNIFEM partnerships in Central and Eastern Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) resulted in a network of organizations working to strengthen women's role in peace-building, including the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe, the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights, the Soros Women's Network Programme and United Nations organizations active in the region.

21. UNIFEM work on leadership also focuses on strengthening linkages across women's machineries, women parliamentarians and the women's movement. Support to the first Women Asia-Pacific Parliamentarians' Conference on Transformative Leadership for Good Governance in the 21st Century resulted in increased understanding of women's transformative leadership and good governance. Support to women's organizations and the national machinery in Ecuador resulted in the adoption of a quota for women of 30 per cent, to increase by 5 per cent in each election until it reaches 50 per cent.

Women's human rights and eliminating violence against women

22. UNIFEM work to promote women's human rights and eliminate violence against women now includes a programme to mainstream gender into HIV/AIDS strategies and an ongoing programme to promote CEDAW and the Trust Fund in Support of Actions to Eliminate Violence against Women. There are three main results in this area.

23. *New and strengthened policies, legislation and commitments in support of women's rights.* A new law on domestic violence in the Ukraine, a national action plan to eliminate violence against women in Indonesia, a national action plan on CEDAW in Nepal, and the use of CEDAW in the constitutional review process in Rwanda are examples of the stronger enabling environments for women's rights created through UNIFEM-supported initiatives in all regions.

24. UNIFEM work on CEDAW has focused on improving reporting, monitoring and implementation and strengthening partnerships between Governments and NGOs to use the Convention to create stronger legal and policy frameworks for gender equality. Programme highlights include CEDAW and Sharia law in Western Asia; CEDAW and women's political participation in Southeast Asia (with UNDP); popularizing CEDAW in the Caribbean; and technical expertise to link CEDAW to other critical global issues, such as HIV/AIDS. UNIFEM facilitates government and NGO participation in preparing CEDAW reports and interaction between NGOs and CEDAW Committee members.

25. *New or stronger institutional mechanisms to address gender-based violence.* Institutional mechanisms were created or strengthened through project initiatives such as those in Bangladesh where the Government is setting up a cross-ministerial anti-trafficking cell and in Brazil where local governments in numerous cities have created an inter-sectoral network of community and government services to improve support for women survivors of violence. UNIFEM is collaborating with the ILO to make visible women's contributions to the "care economy" and the impact of the HIV/AIDS epidemic on women's lives and options. The Fund is also exploring the establishment of gender equality zones (GEZ) to show that, once gender-responsive legal mechanisms and gender-sensitive policies are in place, it is possible to stem the tide of the epidemic and to transform gender relations. The programme is being piloted in India, focusing on mainstreaming gender and human rights issues into the policies of the Indian Railway.

26. *Scaled up and replicable strategies based on UNIFEM-supported pilots and lessons learned* about ending violence and addressing the gender dimensions of HIV/AIDS. The UNIFEM region-wide campaign to end violence against women in the CIS, launched in 2001, replicates the Fund's 1998-1999 campaigns in Latin America and the Caribbean, Africa and Asia and the Pacific. The UNIFEM South Asian initiative to address trafficking of women builds on the experiences of Trust Fund projects and the demand created by the UNIFEM 1999 regional campaign. Training methods developed in the UNIFEM pilot programme on gender-focused interventions to address the challenges of the HIV/AIDS epidemic have been replicated in universities in Thailand, Mexico and the Bahamas.

27. *UNIFEM Trust Fund in Support of Actions to Eliminate Violence against Women* serves as a grant-making laboratory to explore innovative strategies and best practices. Lessons learned from the Trust Fund are fed into national, regional and global programmes that the UNIFEM field network and partners scale up into longer-term, high impact strategies to eliminate violence against women. Since it began operations in 1996, the Trust Fund has awarded $5.3 million to 127 initiatives in over 70 countries. Over the past three years, it has experienced an unprecedented increase in grant applications from 136 in 1999 to over 325 proposals, with requests totaling over $17.5 million in 2001.

The five-year review of the Beijing Platform for Action

28. The five-year review of the Beijing Platform for Action in June 2000 offered a unique opportunity to refocus world attention on the concrete actions needed to achieve gender equality. During the preparatory process, UNIFEM organized training workshops and encouraged young women's involvement. In Western Asia, UNIFEM helped organize the Arab Regional NGO Meeting in February 2000, launching the Arab regional alternative report. In Central and Eastern Europe and the CIS, declarations drafted by workshop participants were incorporated into the regional preparatory document.

29. UNIFEM is also supporting activities to ensure that the momentum generated by the five-year review yields concrete benefits for women's advancement. UNIFEM organized follow-up sessions to enable NGOs to work with Governments on stronger accountability mechanisms in Africa and is carrying out a three-year project to generate social and gender indicators for monitoring the Beijing Platform for Action in Latin America and the Caribbean.

B. Strengthening United Nations system capacity to support gender-mainstreaming

30. As a catalyst and innovator in the United Nations system, UNIFEM has a unique opportunity and responsibility to advocate for United Nations funds, programmes and specialized agencies to strengthen their gender equality

programming. UNIFEM efforts have benefited considerably from the Secretary-General's reform agenda emphasizing increased coordination and collaboration on follow-up to United Nations world conferences.

31. A key achievement for gender advocates in 2001 was the designation of gender equality as a Millennium development goal in its own right and a cross-cutting issue relating to all development goals. This creates unparalleled opportunities to increase attention and accountability for action toward achieving gender equality, as the United Nations system and Governments work together to create indicators and tracking mechanisms for reporting on progress.

32. With regard to the resident coordinator system, inter-agency thematic groups and the common country assessment (CCA) and United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) process continued to provide opportunities to mainstream gender into United Nations programmes and policies. UNIFEM chairs inter-agency thematic groups on gender in 11 countries and co-chairs them with other United Nations organizations agencies in 4 countries. UNIFEM provided substantive input into CCA/UNDAF preparation in 29 countries. At headquarters, the Executive Director of UNIFEM leads the Inter-Agency Meeting on Gender Equality task force on gender mainstreaming in the CCA/UNDAF and has initiated a gender assessment of the CCA/UNDAF process, which will feed into training for United Nations country teams. UNIFEM was the first chair of the Gender Working Group of the United Nations Development Group (UNDG) Task Force on Afghanistan, which led the process of appointing a senior gender adviser to the SRSG to work closely with the Office of the Special Advisor on Gender Issues. UNIFEM worked closely with the country team in Islamabad to formulate the gender component of the ITAP for Afghan People 2002 and the Afghanistan Preliminary Needs Assessment for Recovery and Recruitment by the World Bank, UNDP, and Asian Development Bank.

33. The increased number of agreements with United Nations organizations and the strengthening of existing collaborative efforts have enabled UNIFEM to make progress on its mandate to act as a catalyst in the United Nations system. UNIFEM synergy with UNDP is increasing on a number of fronts, thanks in part to new arrangements that allow UNIFEM to execute projects for UNDP. Through UNIFEM execution of 11 UNDP projects and other modalities, the two organizations are now collaborating on participatory budgets in the Andean region, on the first baseline study on gender disparities in Bhutan and a study on the impact of armed conflict on Palestinian women. The largest project that UNIFEM is executing for UNDP is a $790 000 initiative to promote gender equality in Burundi.

Strengthening synergy with UNDP

- UNDP and UNIFEM, through the Asia Pacific Gender Equality Network (APGEN) Programme, have facilitated implementation of CEDAW and promote women's economic and political participation in the region.
- In 2000, UNIFEM, UNDP and the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean collaborated in supporting the organization of a campaign to end violence against women in the Americas, including the publication of 17 national reports on gender-based violence.
- In 2001, UNIFEM completed execution of a global capacity-building project that brought together UNDP gender focal points and UNIFEM gender advisers to share strategies on gender-mainstreaming and strengthening UNDP/UNIFEM synergies. Participants from Chile, China, Ecuador, Fiji, Kenya, Morocco, Nepal, Trinidad and Tobago, Uzbekistan, and headquarters recommended strengthening cooperation in macroeconomics and national and local budgets, women's access to information and communications technology, ending trafficking of women and engendering legal systems.
- UNIFEM joined the Programme of Assistance to the Palestinian People in Jerusalem to study the impact of armed conflict on Palestinian women. Focused on the impact on service provision as well as on women's status and situation within the Palestinian community, the study will feed into the assessment of women's needs in humanitarian assistance programmes in the area.

34. Strengthened collaboration with UNAIDS resulted in the signing of a memorandum of understanding, the UNIFEM-UNFPA co-chairing of a UNAIDS inter-agency task team on gender and an agreement from UNAIDS

to cover costs for UNIFEM to provide gender expertise in Sierra Leone, India and at UNIFEM headquarters. UNIFEM executes projects for UNFPA in Angola and Indonesia, and backstops gender, population and development specialists in UNFPA country support teams. In Afghanistan, UNIFEM is working with UNHCR at the provincial level to operationalize its programme support for internally displaced and refugee women.

35. In the inter-governmental arena, the Commission on the Status of Women continues to be a key venue in which UNIFEM seeks to connect the normative process with operational realities. In 2001, UNIFEM also brought gender expertise and experience to the Economic and Social Council High-level Segment on Africa, the Second United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II), held in Geneva from 16 to 18 July, and the preparatory committees for the International Conference on Financing for Development. With the United Nations Division for the Advancement of Women and the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), UNIFEM convened an expert group on gender and racial discrimination in preparation for the World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance in Durban, South Africa, 31 August to 7 September, 2001.

C. Learning organization principles and strategic partnerships

36. UNIFEM uses a diverse range of strategies to document and disseminate the analysis, resources and lessons learned that result from its programmes and projects. Publications, audio-visual resources and electronic media ensure broad access to information by policy-makers, United Nations organizations and women's organizations.

37. In preparation for Beijing +5, UNIFEM launched its biennial report, *Progress of the World's Women 2000*, in June 2000. This report examined women's progress over two decades along several critical indicators, some of which have now been incorporated into the MDGs. Two publications launched during the reporting period highlight some effective strategies of women's organizations to work together with communities and the media to combat violence against women. *With An End in Sight: Strategies from the UNIFEM Trust Fund to Eliminate Violence Against Women* features personal stories and detailed accounts of successful community and institutional efforts to combat gender and sexual violence. *Picturing a Life Free of Violence: Media and Communications Strategies to End Violence Against Women* makes available images from anti-violence campaigns worldwide so that they can be adapted for campaigns in other countries and communities. Women's leadership in conflict resolution is highlighted by *Women's Land and Property Rights in Situations of Conflict and Reconstruction*, an online reader featuring testimonies from Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean, the Balkan States, the Middle East and Asia and the Pacific. *Engendering Peace: Reflections on the Burundi Peace Process* documents the three-year advocacy effort to bring Burundi women to the peace table and influence the peace agreement. Publications are available on the UNIFEM web site at www.unifem.undp.org.

38. UNIFEM is promoting the use of video, CD-ROMs, radio, posters and other media to reach larger constituencies with varying levels of literacy and interest. UNIFEM uses electronic outreach through web sites, e-discussion lists, and electronic databases. The Fund's headquarters web site is linked to sub-regional programmes in the Arab States, Asia and the Pacific, Latin America and the Caribbean, Eastern Africa and Central and Eastern Europe and the CIS.

39. UNIFEM activities to build media capacity and networks focus increasingly on improving women's access to and capacity to utilize fully new ICT. In the Arab States, UNIFEM supported the creation of a network of Arab women journalists, Arab Women Connect (AWC), to monitor the portrayal of Arab women in print, audio-visual and electronic media and to lobby media outlets to adopt more gender-sensitive policies.

40. Significant progress has been achieved in moving from isolated projects to thematic programmes supported by assessment. Regional strategic planning exercises and an internal planning process to achieve greater decentralization are contributing to a more strategic focus for UNIFEM initiatives. UNIFEM launched 11 assessment activities, the results of which will underpin programme development and mid-course modifications.

D. Personnel, financial and programme management

41. In line with the spirit of the triennial comprehensive policy review, UNIFEM has taken a number of steps towards decentralization, alignment and simplification of procedures, thereby moving ahead on implementing Objective 4 of the Strategy and Business Plan 2000-2003: ensuring that UNIFEM personnel, financial and programme management systems efficiently and effectively support the goals and programmes of the organization.

42. Critical to the achievement of Objective 4 is strengthening the partnership with UNDP and other funds and programmes so that UNIFEM benefits from the investments that larger organizations make to ensure more efficient and effective systems and processes. Within this context, UNIFEM focused on three strategies: (a) providing quality support in project delivery and other service needs; (b) simplifying procedures and systems and increasing capacity in operations; and (c) supporting decentralization by piloting project budget management.

43. In 2001, UNIFEM completed an internal assessment that identified operational strengths and obstacles and mapped a path toward greater decentralization. In light of this, the approval of the biennium budget at the second regular session of the Executive Board of UNDP/UNFPA in September 2001 strengthened the capacity of UNIFEM to address long-standing operational blockages. The Fund now has two senior level posts – Deputy Director for Programmes and Chief of Operations – allowing a stronger focus on human resources management, finance and programming.

44. Closer working relationships have been established with UNDP counterparts to ensure constant communications between the two organizations so that UNIFEM can benefit from procedure and systems changes instituted in UNDP. UNIFEM and UNDP are in dialogue to arrive at a standardized agreement for reimbursing UNDP country offices for support services. These mechanisms should result in cost savings and less variations in cost calculations.

45. A longer-term strategy to increase efficiency in operations is the plan to support decentralization. UNIFEM is piloting a decentralized approach to project budget management in selected offices. Barbados, Jordan and Zimbabwe are the first sites to test decentralized systems, with the pilot implemented during the second half of 2002.

E. Expanded resource base

46. The Strategy and Business Plan 2000-2003 sets out a challenge for UNIFEM to become a $40-$50 million fund by 2003. This means achieving three sub-objectives: (a) strengthening and expanding partnerships with bilateral donors around areas of common concern; (b) leveraging funds for gender equality and women's rights through new partnerships with multilateral agencies; and (c) exploring opportunities to develop partnerships with socially responsible private-sector entities. Strategies to achieve these objectives include: (a) strengthening the capacity of UNIFEM staff in the field and headquarters and in its national committees to mobilize resources; (b) continuing to improve reporting and project implementation in order to build donor confidence; and (c) developing cost-effective and compelling communications and media strategies to build name recognition for UNIFEM and considerably expand interest in its work.

47. In 2001, the UNIFEM resource-mobilization strategy focused on laying the groundwork for strategic partnerships with diverse donors around key thematic areas. Contributions to core increased by 10 per cent from $19 million in 2000 to $21 million in 2001, representing the first time that UNIFEM core resources surpassed $20 million. Multi-year pledges to cost sharing and sub-trust funds increased by more than 50 per cent from 2000 to 2001.

Partnerships with bilateral donors

48. A total of 43 donor and programme countries contributed to UNIFEM in 2001; the top ten are the United Kingdom, the Netherlands, Italy, Norway, United States, Japan, Sweden, Canada, Finland and Germany. Bilateral donors represent 92 per cent of the UNIFEM resource base and remain key partners as well as an essential source of funds. As a sign of donor confidence, total contributions to UNIFEM core resources from bilateral donors rose in 2001, with increased contributions from eight Governments. In addition, UNIFEM field representatives continue to build close partnerships directly with bilateral organizations in their regions. The Government of Netherlands is supporting CEDAW programming in the Arab States and Beijing +5 follow-up in South Asia. The Canadian International Development Agency, the Department of International Development of the Government of the United Kingdom and the Netherlands continue to support the UNIFEM national facilitation initiative for the implementation of the Platform for Action and the Advancement of Women in Kenya. The United States is supporting a programme to combat trafficking in women in South Asia and Italy is supporting a programme on women's empowerment and local governance participation in Cuba.

Collaboration with multilateral organizations

49. UNIFEM continues to fulfill its mandate as a catalyst within the United Nations system by building partnerships with other United Nations organizations. Several partnerships resulted in increased resources, either for UNIFEM or for efforts critical to advancing work in the Fund's three thematic areas. In 2001, UNIFEM managed resources from UNDP, UNAIDS, UNICEF and UNFPA. UNIFEM often facilitates partnerships between women's NGOs and United Nations organizations in programme countries that result in increased support for women's groups and pilot projects. Results from these innovative approaches support gender-mainstreaming and the scaling-up of innovative efforts.

Partnerships with foundations and private-sector entities

50. Within the broader United Nations context of exploring partnerships with private-sector entities, UNIFEM has explored new partnerships with international NGOs, private foundations, corporations and individuals. A key focus is to ensure that UNIFEM private-sector partnerships are consistent with the Fund's values and goals. UNIFEM has close working relationships with the United Nations Foundation and the United Nations Foundation for International Partnerships, which in 2001made their largest grant in the women and health category to the UNIFEM Women in Conflict Prevention and Conflict Resolution programme. The Ford Foundation provided major support for a project to improve gender sensitivity in police stations in India and contributed to another programme to build a global network on gender and institutional change. The Noel Foundation supported a project to market Mayan women's crafts in Mexico and Zonta International included three UNIFEM concept papers for consideration in its 2002-2004 cycle.

In 2001, the Conrad N. Hilton Foundation made a $100 000 grant to UNIFEM at the request of the Secretary-General, who generously donated the prize to the Trust Fund in Support for Actions to Eliminate Violence Against Women.

51. UNIFEM field offices are taking the lead in developing ways to work with private sector partners, such as the Dakar office partnership with L'Occitane to provide buyers for women shea butter producers in Burkina Faso and the Amman office partnership with Cisco Systems to support an information technology training facility for women. The Brazil office was invited to address a conference convened by ETHOS, an association of socially responsible businesses and is exploring working with publishers and multinationals to promote women's human rights in the sub-region.

IV. Challenges and opportunities for the second biennium 2002-2003

52. As programming expands in all three thematic areas, it is crucial for UNIFEM to improve systems to share lessons and respond to key challenges across themes. As a relatively small United Nations fund, UNIFEM has limited investment capacity to acquire the technologies and systems needed to support learning, yet to fulfill its mandate as a catalyst for gender mainstreaming and equality, it is essential that UNIFEM staff and partners be engaged in reflection, analysis and dissemination of learning to an ever-widening constituency. Training, time and incentives are needed to ensure that all staff make full use of electronic learning platforms such as intranets and extranets, both as contributors and as users.

53. Opportunities and challenges for mainstreaming gender in the United Nations system have also increased. The provision of gender expertise is a critical part of this effort. The UNIFEM Gender Advisor programme, collaboration with UNFPA on fielding gender population and development specialists, and with UNDP and UNV on fielding gender specialists have increased gender expertise in the field. Evaluations of these programmes during 2001-2002 will inform the development of revised plans, which also take into account the changing environment. UNIFEM is also exploring the provision of "gender-on-demand" services to United Nations country teams, with the support of UNDP.

54. UNIFEM has made great strides over the past two years in moving from projects to programmes. In line with the Strategy and Business Plan 2000-2003, new tracking, monitoring and evaluation mechanisms are needed, with greater focus on assessing progress toward results rather than completion of activities. The full operation and staffing of the Innovation and Learning Unit has been given high priority in 2002, in order to build tools and capacities that serve the whole organization, while focusing on support to field staff to lead the learning process.

55. It is critical that UNIFEM benefit from the UNDP comprehensive exercise to simplify and streamline processes in human resources, financial management and information technology. UNIFEM will continue its ongoing dialogue with UNDP so that more personnel responsibility can be devolved to UNIFEM in line with the UNDP decentralization exercise. This includes ensuring that the operational needs and business processes of the Fund are taken into account in the new enterprise resource planning system. The UNIFEM decentralization of project budget management needs to be piloted and evaluated in selected field offices in order to support programme activities in the field more effectively.

56. While UNIFEM continues to explore partnerships with non-traditional donors, especially corporations, greater investment in staff capacity and concrete guidelines are needed to ensure that these are consistent with UNIFEM values and priorities. Increased capacity and more intensive media outreach are needed to develop more partnerships that generate financial support from private foundations and individuals. UNIFEM is building the capacity of staff and national committees to become more active and successful in mobilizing resources from a broader range of supporters.